GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES AND MINERALS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6217
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2000
FIRE IN MADHUBAN COAL WASHERY
HARIBHAU MAHALE

Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any incident of fire has taken place in the coal washeries of Bharat Coking Coal Limited during the last three years:

(b) if so, the details thereof and the causes for the incident;

(c) the amount of loss suffered due to incident;

(d) whether the Government have conducted any inquiry in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether on the basis of primary estimate, Madhuban Coal Washery was slated to start functioning since March, 1995 but the construction of this coal washery could not be completed in the stipulated time; and (g) if so, the reason therefor ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINES & MINERALS

(SMT. RITA VERMA)

(a) & (b): During the last 3 years there have been two instances of fire in coal washeries of BCCL.Details and causes of these fires are as under:

(i) At Bhojudih washery, on 6-5-98 there was a minor fire in starter board in electrical control room. The cause of fire was short circuit in the control panel of the starter board.

(ii) At Madhuban Washery, fire broke out after 10.30 P.M. on 10-12-1998 in the main raw coal feed conveyors (902 A&B). As a result of this fire, the belt conveyors 902 A&B were completely burnt and major portion of the conveyor gantry collapsed. A committee which enquired into the cases of the fire has found that the most probable reason for the fire was the heat generated due to the friction between rollers and conveyor belting on account of jamming of rollers resulting in ignition of coal dust.

(c): The estimated loss is estimated at Rs. 166 Lakhsin Madhuban washery involving the gantries including civil, structural, mechanical and electrical equipment. There was practically no loss at Bhojudih washery. In addition, there was loss of production at Madhuban washery for 245 days and at Bhojudih washery for 1 Â½ days.

(d) & (e): A committee was constituted to inquire into the accident of Madhuban washery. The committee held that most probably the reason for fire was ignition of coal dust accumulated in the conveyor gantries. Heavy deposition of coal dust between idlers and conveyor belting would have caught fire due to friction developed between the moving belts and idlers. The fire in the coal dust must have spread below the conveyor. After stoppage of belting, the belting would have caught fire from the coal dust, which was already under fire. With the heating, whole steel structure would have buckled under load and collapsed along with the trestles carrying the conveyor gantry. The fire would have further compounded with burning of two numbers of conveyor belting. The committee held seven officers responsible for the incident. Disciplinary action has been initiated against all these seven officers.

The committee also suggested the following remedial measures to avoid such mishap.

(i) Proper cleaning of machineries and its surroundings.

(ii) Maintenance of records regarding cleaning.

(iii) Dust suppression by creation of water mist.

(iv) Installation of dust extraction system.

(v) Special attention to be paid to inspect places where oil is likely to drip.

(vi) Fixation of skirt boards to avoid spillage.

(vii) installation of fire detection devices.

(viii) Installation of fire extinguishers.

(ix) Upkeep of fire tenders and internal fire fighting system in the plant.

(x) Use of fire resistance belting.

(xi) Display of sign boards showing periodicity of cleaning.

(xii) Proper elimination.

(xiii) Well structure organisation chart for entire washery organisation.

(f) & (g): The work of construction of Madhuban washery onturn key basis was awarded to M/s. Mining & Allied Machinery Corporation Ltd. A public sector undertaking in December, 1985 & MAMC was supposed tocomplete the washery by December, 1988. As per RCE(93) this was to be completedby March, 1995 but the work could not be completed within the revised stipulated time due to following reasons:

(1) Delay in placement of order for imported and indigenous equipment by MAMC.

(2) Delay in submission of GA drawing by MAMC.

(3) Delay in completion of construction and commissioning of plant by MAMC.

(4) Delay in availability of forest land, which affected the works at cross country conveyors.

(5) Inadequate resource mobilisation by M/s. MAMC and its sub-contractors.

(6) Precarious financial condition of MAMC and non engagement of sufficient agencies with required manpower by MAMC.

(7) Some individuals claimed ownership of the land handed over to BCCL by Forest Department, Govt. of Bihar in October, 1985. The matter is sub-judice in the court of law.